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SB 667 SD 1 HD 1 RELATING TO NATURAL AREA RESERVES

Statement for
House Committee on
Finance
Public Hearing - March 22, 1989

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SB 667 SD 1 HD 1 provides certain amendments to the language of Section 195-4 and 195-9 with regard to:

- 1) The powers and duties of the Department of Land and Natural Resources as they pertain to the natural area reserve system.
- 2) Directs the department to conduct public hearings, with special notice, prior to the designation of any State lands into the reserve system or before the governor can revoke or modify an executive order that sets aside lands for the reserve system.
- 3) Provides \$4 million to the natural area reserve system to conduct management activities.

Our statement on this bill does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

We strongly support the intent of SB 667 SD 1 HD 1. The purpose of this bill is to afford the public the opportunity to express their opinions at a public hearing regarding land use decisions with respect to the establishment or revocation of natural area lands. In addition this bill will appropriate the necessary funding to conduct adequate management activities.

We are pleased to note that notice of the public hearings will be published in the OEQC Bulletin. This bulletin receives wide circulation among both the government and private sectors and notice in the OEQC Bulletin will help to assure that those with special expertise or interest in natural resource management are apprised of proposed additions or deletions to the Natural Area Reserves System.

We suggest that the 20 days notice for the holding of public hearings be clarified to mean 20 working days notice. Because many of those with interest and expertise in decisions affecting the Natural Area Reserve lands are likely to be informed of proposed actions through the OEQC Bulletin and because the OEQC Bulletin is published only twice a month, we believe that at least 20 working days notice will be needed to assure adequate opportunity for public input.

Futhermore, we concur with the amendments to Section 195-9. The appropriation of \$4 million for the Natural Area Reserves System is absolutely essential for adequate management of the areas. In addition, the amendments under Section (c) will require accountability which should facilitate sound fiscal management.